

BEFORE  
THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF  
SOUTH CAROLINA  
DOCKET NO. 2000-0013-C - ORDER NO. 2000-0232  
MARCH 7, 2000

IN RE: Proceeding to Address Performance Measures ) ORDER GRANTING  
and Third Party Testing of the Operations ) REQUEST TO ALLOW  
Support Systems (OSS) of BellSouth ) INFORMAL  
Telecommunications, Inc. ) PROCEEDINGS

The Public Service Commission of South Carolina ("Commission") opened a generic docket to address inter-carrier quality of service measures, including performance measures, "performance guarantees," penalties, and liquidated damages provisions, related to competitive local exchange services offered within South Carolina. As part of the generic docket, the Commission also directed that Third Party Testing of the Operations Support Systems ("OSS") of BellSouth Telecommunications, Inc. be addressed.

The Commission provided notice of the generic docket, and several interested entities intervened in the proceedings. A hearing was scheduled to begin on March 20, 2000, at 11:00 a.m.

On February 14, 2000, AT&T Communications of the Southern States, Inc. ("AT&T"), BellSouth Telecommunications, Inc. ("BellSouth"), TriVergent Communications ("TriVergent"), and MCI WorldCom Network Services, Inc. and MCI WorldCom Communications, Inc. (collectively referred to as "MCI WorldCom") filed a

letter with the Commission in which these Parties<sup>1</sup> requested, *inter alia*, that the formal hearing scheduled for March 20, 2000, be converted to an informal proceeding. In support of their request, these Parties offered that a less formal format allows the subject matter experts to share information with the Commission Staff and among themselves in a more open and free flowing manner. The Parties suggested that in other states an informal exchange of information has permitted resolution of many issues and clarified party positions for hearing.

The Parties also requested that the Commission consider conducting separate informal conferences addressing OSS testing and performance measures. The Parties offered that the issues relating to OSS testing and performance measures are numerous and detailed. Further, the Parties stated that proceedings are underway in several states regarding performance measures and third party testing of BellSouth's OSS. The Parties requested that the Commission schedule separate informal conferences beginning with OSS testing on March 20, 2000, where all interested parties would have an opportunity to (1) present their respective positions and (2) brief the Commission regarding developments on OSS testing and performance measures in other jurisdictions.

United Telephone Company of the Carolinas ("United") and Sprint Communications Company L.P. ("Sprint"), also parties to this generic docket, filed a

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<sup>1</sup> The Commission realizes that there exist parties in the instant docket other than the parties enumerated in this order. However, for purposes of this order, the Commission's reference to "Parties" refers to AT&T, BellSouth, TriVergent, and MCI WorldCom, as these are the parties which filed the request that is the subject of this order.

letter in support of the Parties' request for informal conferences in lieu of or prior to any formal hearing.

Upon consideration of the instant requests, the Commission finds that the request to modify the current formal proceeding to an informal proceeding to allow and include presentations by interested parties should be granted. Further, the Commission finds that the request to bifurcate the proceeding to address OSS testing in one proceeding and performance measures in a separate proceeding should be granted. In granting these requests, the Commission finds that an informal proceeding, or an initial proceeding that is less formal than a formal hearing, will be beneficial as such an informal proceeding should promote a more open and free flowing exchange of information. Further, a less formal format with open exchange of information may result in the resolution of issues and may allow for the utilization of work that has already been done in other states. The Commission further recognizes the volume, complexity, and detail of the issues and finds that informal and separate proceedings on the OSS testing and performance measures will promote the interests of all parties involved by providing the opportunity for the open exchange of information.

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED THAT:

1. The formal hearing established by the Notice of Proceeding and Hearing in the instant docket is modified to informal proceedings to include presentations by any interested parties on the issues of third party testing of BellSouth's OSS and of performance measures.

2. The issues named in the instant generic proceeding, being third party testing of BellSouth's OSS and performance measures, are bifurcated into separate proceedings where the issue of third party testing of BellSouth's OSS will have one informal proceeding and the issue of performance measures will have a separate informal proceeding.

3. The formal hearing currently scheduled for March 20, 2000, at 11:00 a.m. is cancelled.

4. The informal conference approved herein on the issue of third party testing of BellSouth's OSS will be conducted beginning on Monday, March 20, 2000, at 11:00 a.m.

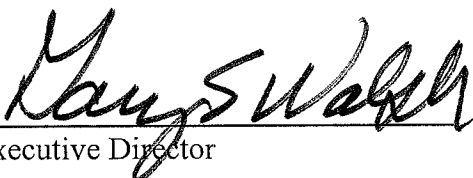
5. The informal conference on performance measures will be scheduled for a later date which has yet to be determined.

6. This Order shall remain in full force and effect until further Order of the Commission.

BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION:

  
Chairman

ATTEST:

  
Executive Director

(SEAL)